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Keeping track of latest trends

Furniture fair offers good options for traders and manufacturers

By VINCENT TAN

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Photo by RAJA FAISAL HISHAN

MANUFACTURER Yong Eng Swee of Safari Office Furniture Sdn Bhd has been exhibiting his products at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) for the past 15 years.

The managing director said although he had been in the industry for more than 30 years, he only began exporting his products a decade ago.

"Most of our clients are from Africa and the Middle East, but we also get some Russian and East European clients as well.

"Although we use European technology to manufacture our furniture, our prices are competitive," said Yong.

He said due to the change in trend, buyers both local and foreign often requested for their furniture to be eco-friendly.

Yong's company provides furniture solutions for offices as well as interior design for homes.

In addition to local manufacturers, the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) was also on hand to showcase some of the products at the 18th edition of MIFF.

FRIM advanced processing and

design programme head Dr Tan Yu Eng said FRIM had been participating every year in MIFF since its debut.

"One of our aims is to showcase alternative sources for furniture material along with technology demonstrations for interested Malaysian companies.

"We sell ideas, such as demonstrating the feasibility of materials. The exact application is up to the manufacturers," said Dr Tan.

Dr Tan said in addition to traditional wood such as *meranti* or teak, lesser-known feedstock such as oil palm wood or *nibong* were also viable alternatives.

"There is more than just using and modifying local wood sources. We have also engineered some clones as part of our upstream research to provide viable alternatives for use by the industry," he added.

Branko Babic from St. Paul, Minnesota in the United States, said he had been visiting the trade show for the last eight years as a furniture wholesaler.

"Usually, I visit the fair on the first and second day to see what pieces to bring for the market back home," said Babic.

Ivan Shen, from Taiwan said the fair was one way to keep up with the latest trends and developments in the furniture indus-

try.

"We came over here to take stock of the developments, so that we can go back to Taiwan and develop further.

"It is also a venue for us to build our relationships with clients and suppliers here," said Shen.

The 18th Malaysian International Furniture Fair held at the Putra World Trade Centre and Matrade Exhibition and Convention Centre ends tomorrow.

For details log onto www.miff.com.my



Try it: Visitors, whether buying for personal use or business, will have the chance to test the products on display.

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Look around: A bird's eye view of one of the exhibition sections at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair 2012.



Strong enough: Tiffany Kwong of Merryfair Chair System Sdn Bhd doing an impromptu tolerance test of her company's products at the fair.

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For babies' comfort: Seni Daya Woods Ind (M) Sdn Bhd's exhibitor Faye Teoh tidying up a wooden crib on display.



Plenty to choose from: Visitors to the Malaysian International Furniture Fair 2012 are spoilt for choices with the number products on display, ranging from traditional woodwork to futuristic designs.